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SUBJECT: Venezuela Criticizes Peruvian President Garcia; Continues to Denounce Alleged Threat from Dutch Antilles

CLASSIFIED BY: Robin D. Meyer, Political Counselor, DOS, POL; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

Alan Garcia the New Target

¶1. (SBU) The Venezuelan government (GBRV) quickly responded to Peruvian President Alan Garcia's January 2 statement that Bolivian President Evo Morales is criticizing Peru based on orders from Venezuela. A Ministry of Foreign Affairs January 4 press release "emphatically rejected" the "insolent" statements of Garcia against President Chavez. The press released said that Garcia's statements "not only demonstrate his submission to the strategy of dividing South America promoted by the imperial elites of the United States, but corroborate his contempt for integration, and particularly of Peru's neighboring countries, as well as for the elemental norms of peaceful and respectful coexistence that should exist in our region." The press release further claimed that his "undignified commentary" only "takes us back to the old practices of the continent's oligarchies, in which presidents, far from serving their people, dedicated their time to vice, leisure, and the planning of intrigues to generate hate and disunity." The press release concluded by expressing its concern that the "heroic people of Peru are being dishonored by a government that, prostituting the principle of asylum, has dedicated itself to converting this sister country into a hide-out for corrupt and criminal politicians who have fled from justice." [Note: This last sentence apparently refers to several opposition political leaders who have sought asylum in Peru after being accused of corruption. End Note.] Government-owned television stations and the major newspapers reported on this official attack on Garcia.

Accusations Continue of a U.S.- Dutch Alliance to Attack Venezuela

¶2. (C) Despite both U.S. and Dutch denials of overflights by UAV's, Venezuelan government media continued to accuse the United States and the Netherlands of planning a military attack on Venezuela from the Dutch islands of Aruba and Curacao, a charge first raised in President Chavez's December 17, 2009 speech in Copenhagen. On January 5, Venezuelan Vice President and Defense Minister Ramon Carrizalez reiterated this claim and purported to have evidence confirming the potential use of Curacao for military operations against Venezuela. He cited an alleged overflight on May 27, 2009 by a "U.S. warplane" leaving from Curacao to show that

the concern about a possible attack should not be minimized.
Independent media has covered U.S. and Dutch comments dismissing
Venezuela's earlier accusations.

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